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STEVENSON'S ATTITVDE TO LIFE

BY

JOHN F. GENVNG

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STEVENSON'S ATTITUDE TO LIFE : WITH READINGS FROM HIS ESSAYS AND LETTERS. BY JOHN FRANKLIN GENUNG

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PREFATORY NOTE

HE marks of oral discourse, which this book still bears from its original form as a lecture, it has not been thought best to remove. What was first read aloud by the author he now gives, to those who care for the theme, opportunity to read for themselves. And if, beyond the sound of his voice, some fit audience may like to hear how the deep music of life reverberates from one of the sanest minds, one of the bravest hearts, of the century just past, the purpose of this little volume will be fulfilled.

For the readings, which have a very vital share in giving the volume whatever value it has, thankful acknowledgment is hereby made to Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons, who have kindly given permission to quote from works of which they hold the copyright. The readings are taken from the Thistle Edition of Stevenson's works.

Amherst, Massachusetts, February 6, 1901.

STEVENSON'S ATTITUDE TO LIFE

TEVENSON'S attitude to life: this is what we now propose to consider; a natural enough subject of inquiry, it would seem; and yet the very proposal, as thus phrased, is a departure from the Stevensonian idiom. If he had the framing of an ideal for us, his first counsel, I imagine, would be, Do not assume an attitude toward life at all, but just live; do not be a spectator and critic of the business of living, but throw yourself into the heart of it, and be all there, and say no more about it.

ROM this consideration radiates our whole subject. In Stevenson's implicit philosophy a formulated attitude would be too much like attitudinizing; too self-conscious and put on; too much sicklied o'er with the uneasy introspectiveness of the tired century. Enough of posing and irresolution outside the arena of life; such, we may be sure, was his thought as he listened to the utterances that came surging up to him from the inner heart of his time. And so what he represents first and wholesomest of all, what most gives him power on his age, is the robust reaction against all this which breathes like an ozone through every page of his writings. Not that this reaction is overt, or that he takes it upon himself to set up a pro-

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test. One great element of his power, on the contrary, is the entire absence of remonstrance, or of anything merely negative or repressive. He simply ignores that benumbing arrière pensée which for full half a century has so beset the faith of the world, and dares to take life at its positive intrinsic value, without the disquiet of morbid analysis. That is all; his "attitude" is merely the free joyous erectness of the undismayed soul.

To approach life with fearless confidence that it means intensely and means good; to bear full weight upon it, never letting encroaching doubts or disillusions chill the youthful spirit in which the soul first welcomes the world, — a hearty gospel this; introduced by him, too, just at a time when the spirit of the age might turn to it most gratefully, as to a sunshine out of fogs and discomfort. And not only Stevenson's words, but his life no less, ennobled that gospel; maintained as it was under such difficulties of physical weakness and enforced exile that just for this brave service we count him among the heroes and martyrs of literature; classing him as a worthy peer in the same rank with Walter Scott, breathing forth the rarest spirit of romance from under his burden of unrighteous debt, and Charles Lamb, adding to the world's joy by his immortal words written from the home where in lifelong renunciation of conjugal comfort he was caring for a mad sister. All these buried their hardships in silence away from the world, while they coined their life's best ore into a mintage of health and

cheer. Nor can we count the latest-born the least of these, when we recall how almost from earliest years he lived face to face with death, yet not in defiance but with unflagging buoyancy and courage wrought as he could snatch respite from disease to fulfil what we may truly call his message to the world. To work thus was his animating principle, his life-creed; and this very triumph of spirit was his greatest message.

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You remember how bravely this trait of his comes to expression in his essay Æs Triplex, an essay not only full of his own life but singularly prophetic of his manner of leaving it. The whole essay ought to be quoted; I will read you merely the last page. "Who would find heart enough," he says, "to begin to live, if he dallied with the consideration of death? . . . It is better to lose health like a spendthrift than to waste it like a miser. It is better to live and be done with it, than to die daily in the sick-room. By all means begin your folio; even if the doctor does not give you a year, even if he hesitates about a month, make one brave push and see what can be accomplished in a week. It is not only in finished undertakings that we ought to honour useful labour. A spirit goes out of the man who means execution, which outlives the most untimely ending. All who have meant good work with their whole hearts, have done good work, although they may die before they have the time to sign it. Every heart that has beat strong and cheerfully has left a hopeful impulse behind it in the world, and bettered the

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tradition of mankind. And even if death catch people, like an open pitfall, and in mid-career, laying out vast projects, and planning monstrous foundations, flushed with hope, and their mouths full of boastful language, they should be at once tripped up and silenced: is there not something brave and spirited in such a termination? and does not life go down with a better grace, foaming in full body over a precipice, than miserably straggling to an end in sandy deltas? When the Greeks made their fine saying that those whom the gods love die young, I cannot help believing they had this sort of death also in their eye. For surely, at whatever age it overtake the man, this is to die young. Death has not been suffered to take so much as an illusion from his heart. In the hot-fit of life, a-tiptoe on the highest point of being, he passes at a bound on to the other side. The noise of the mallet and chisel is scarcely quenched, the trumpets are hardly done blowing, when, trailing with him clouds of glory, this happy-starred, full-blooded spirit shoots into the spiritual land."

A "happy-starred, full-blooded spirit,"—how well this phrase describes that man within Stevenson who so courageously and against such tyrannous odds struggled toward an utterance that should be, like himself, full of the glory of life. "Vital," he writes in one of his letters to Colvin,—"that's what I am at first: wholly vital, with a buoyancy of life." This was not an aim that came to him casually; he knew well what it meant, and how it squared with his

limitations. "Quite early in his career," says Edmund Gosse, "he adjusted himself to the inevitable sense of physical failure. He threw away from him all the useless impediments: he sat loosely in the saddle of life. Many men who get such a warning as he got take up something to lean against; according to their education or temperament, they support their maimed existence on religion, or on cynical indifference, or on some mania of the collector or the dilettante. Stevenson did none of these things. He determined to make the sanest and most genial use of so much of life as was left him. As any one who reads his books can see, he had a deep strain of natural religion; but he kept it to himself; he made no hysterical or ostentatious use of it." This deep-lying strain in Stevenson's nature, all the more potent because so sacredly reticent,—which Mr. Gosse calls natural religion, which in order to avoid an ungenial connotation I prefer to call his attitude to life,—let us now consider a little more particularly, looking first at its power and timeliness in the age, and then at its more salient elements, as springing from their points of outset in him.

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IN his relation to the age, Stevenson may be regarded as pioneer in the new mood or spiritual current now well under way; a mood much heartier and wholesomer than what it succeeds; nor is it on the whole less reverent, albeit far less ob-

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servant of devotional or philosophical forms. We may in a word call it a spiritual return to nature.

A few moments ago I spoke of that blighting arrière pensée which has so inveterately clung to a half-century's faith, and the complete ignoring of which gives so invigorating a tone to Stevenson's work. In 1889 Richard Holt Hutton described this as "the spiritual fatigue of the world," and by way of illustration named such works as Amiel's Journal and Mrs. Humphry Ward's Robert Elsmere. We also, as we recall the period stretching back from that date, have a general sense that much of its foremost utterance was morbid, and very little of it buoyantly joyful. We recall how George Eliot sat in pensive despair over a world to be noble and unhappy in; how Matthew Arnold was dejectedly

"Wandering between two worlds, — one dead,
The other powerless to be born;"

how Clough gave up the whole problem, yet still clung to it in blank bewilderment; how it was as much as ever that Tennyson, by a dead lift of faith, succeeded in reaching a point where on the whole the odds were in favour of heaven; how even Browning, with his insistent optimism, not seldom gave the impression of whistling to keep his courage up. Every outlook of life was clouded with difficulty and gloom. We did not feel the strain of it so much then; it was the dominant mood of things; but as we look back now it already seems far-away

and strange, and we feel as if we had survived an epidemic. The world had brooded on the mystery of existence until it was tired out. Long and stern had the struggle been; no wonder the great labouring heart of the age was weary. As long ago as 1833 Carlyle, in true prophetic spirit, had anticipated the stress and conflict, and had hurled at it his own characteristic solution. "Strangely enough," he makes Teufelsdröckh say of his spiritual troubles, "I lived in a continual, indefinite, pining fear; tremulous, pusillanimous, apprehensive of I knew not what; it seemed as if all things in the Heavens above and the Earth beneath would hurt me; as if the Heavens and the Earth were but boundless jaws of a devouring monster, wherein I, palpitating, waited to be devoured. — Full of such humour, and perhaps the miserablest man in the whole French Capital or Suburbs, was I, one sultry Dog-day, after much perambulation, toiling along the dirty little Rue Saint-Thomas de l'Enfer, among civic rubbish enough, in a close atmosphere, and over pavements hot as Nebuchadnezzar's Furnace; whereby doubtless my spirits were little cheered; when, all at once, there rose a Thought in me, and I asked myself: 'What art thou afraid of? Wherefore, like a coward, dost thou forever pip and pimper, and go cowering and trembling? Despicable biped! what is the sum-total of the worst that lies before thee? Death? Well, Death; and say the pangs of Tophet too, and all that the Devil and Man may, will or can do against thee! Hast thou not a heart; canst thou not suffer whatsoever

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it be; and, as a Child of Freedom, though outcast, trample Tophet itself under thy feet, while it consumes thee? Let it come, then; I will meet it and defy it!' And as I so thought, there rushed like a stream of fire over my whole soul; and I shook base Fear away from me forever. I was strong, of unknown strength; a spirit, almost a god. Ever from that time, the temper of my misery was changed: not Fear or whining Sorrow was it, but Indignation and grim fire-eyed Defiance."

Great fierce words these; but they are not so much a solution as a gage of battle. There is nothing settling or reposeful in them. They can issue in an Everlasting No, or in a Yea so truculent as to seem like a perpetual quarrel with the order of things, but not in peace or acquiescent joy. And this mood of defiance is just as wearing, it just as surely brings spiritual fatigue and depression, as does doubt or fear. It is not the stable equilibrium of the soul; it is in fact only another phase of that same stress and strain under which our age has so sadly laboured.

From such a tension as this a reaction sooner or later is inevitable. And it is fortunate, when the reaction comes, if the determining influence of it, the pioneer spirit, guide it in natural ways, not as revolution and sour lawlessness but as uplift and enrichment. To have done this, to have been a leading spirit in making a great reaction sane and sweet, is Stevenson's incalculable service to his age. It was not in protest but in the spontaneous joy of living, not in re-

bellion against past or present but in the whole-hearted desire to add to the wealth of existence, that he gave to the world his exquisite essays and adventure stories. All that was established he was content to let be, and to build upon. "New truth," he says, "is only useful to supplement the old; rough truth is only wanted to expand, not to destroy, our civil and often elegant conventions." He did not set out to revolutionize men's attitude to life; it is doubtful if he knew how much he was doing. But somehow forthwith the tension was relieved, and before they knew it those melancholy souls who had brooded over knotty problems of heaven and earth until they ached with the strain, found themselves deep in a boy's book of adventure and treasure hunting which was restful and delightful just because it contained no nice balancing of motives, no calculation of moral chances, and no conscience at all. Here was the timely offset to a literature which, keeping to its old formulas long after their first poignancy was gone, was beginning to run twaddle. It was a return to run-wild elemental nature, to the stratum below the conventionalisms and artificialities of life; and it was made in the healthiest, least-disturbing way possible; not by denial or even propaganda, not by a picnic return to nature like Rousseau's, but by simply harking back to the buoyant youthfulness that still survives in all of us,—das Ewigjugendliche. In youth, and in the spirit of youthfulness, we dare to let our blood bound and our untormented conscience carry off the experiences

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that come. We trust ourselves to the impulses of a period that has not yet become morbid and introspective. Full of energy this morning spirit is, but it is the energy of a large and joyous scale of living; a noble manhood-energy which is its own excuse for being. Such was the vital truth that Stevenson was concerned to set forth; and no lesson ever came in better time.

The first impression this makes upon us is that of simplifying things. It bids us come out of the heat and the worry, and let ourselves enjoy. "We are in such haste," he says in his essay on Walking Tours, "to be doing, to be writing, to be gathering gear, to make our voice audible a moment in the derisive silence of eternity, that we forget that one thing, of which these are but the parts — namely, to live. We fall in love, we drink hard, we run to and fro upon the earth like frightened sheep. And now you are to ask yourself if, when all is done, you would not have been better to sit by the fire at home, and be happy thinking. To sit still and contemplate, — to remember the faces of women without desire, to be pleased by the great deeds of men without envy, to be everything and everywhere in sympathy, and yet content to remain where and what you are — is not this to know both wisdom and virtue, and to dwell with happiness? After all, it is not they who carry flags, but they who look upon it from a private chamber, who have the fun of the procession."

That life is a thing to be lived, not brooded over;

that the net result of it, as its problems are met, should be joy and confidence, not introspection and fear;—this is the medicine that Stevenson would apply to the spiritual fatigue of his time. For a man so to do is to be master of himself and his station and his fate; it is venturing to take the beauty and the promise of the present as true and as hiding no treachery for the time or eternity to come.

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A man who holds such a view of life as this must make his reckoning with the current ideas of things, evolved as these are from the desperate earnestness of our science and philosophy, and clouded over by the mystery that fills this unintelligible world. Nor is Stevenson wanting here. He is not at all out of touch with this scientific age, or with the closest and most searching study of all its conditions; but science, he is well aware, has its place, where it may attend to one department of life, but not to all, and not to what is really inner and vital. His centre and citadel is a place that science can neither invade nor enrich, a place where all the life, and not the brain alone, has its world. "There are moments," he says, in his essay on Pan's Pipes, "when the mind refuses to be satisfied with evolution, and demands a ruddier presentation of the sum of man's experience. Sometimes the mood is brought about by laughter at the humorous side of life. . . . Sometimes it comes by the spirit of delight, and sometimes by the spirit of terror. At least, there will always be hours when we refuse to be put off by the feint of explanation, nicknamed sci-

ence; and demand instead some palpitating image of our estate, that shall represent the troubled and uncertain element in which we dwell, and satisfy reason by the means of art. Science writes of the world as if with the cold finger of a starfish; it is all true; but what is it when compared to the reality of which it discourses? where hearts beat high in April, and death strikes, and hills totter in the earthquake, and there is a glamour over all the objects of sight, and a thrill in all noises for the ear, and Romance herself has made her dwelling among men?"

The same with philosophy. Brought into the presence of life, as life was meant to be, all its laboured explanations shrivel and dry up, leaving us with the feeling that it never saw the reality of its object at all. What is life, when all is said? and what shall we do with it? This is how Stevenson estimates philosophy in his essay on Æs Triplex: "All literature, from Job and Omar Khayyam to Thomas Carlyle or Walt Whitman, is but an attempt to look upon the human state with such largeness of view as shall enable us to rise from the consideration of living to the Definition of Life. And our sages give us about the best satisfaction in their power when they say that it is a vapour, or a show, or made out of the same stuff with dreams. Philosophy, in its more rigid sense, has been at the same work for ages; and after a myriad bald heads have wagged over the problem, and piles of words have been heaped one upon another into dry and cloudy volumes

without end, philosophy has the honour of laying before us, with modest pride, her contribution towards the subject: that life is a Permanent Possibility of Sensation. Truly a fine result! A man may very well love beef, or hunting, or a woman; but surely, surely, not a Permanent Possibility of Sensation! He may be afraid of a precipice, or a dentist, or a large enemy with a club, or even an undertaker's man; but not certainly of abstract death. We may trick with the word life in its dozen senses until we are weary of tricking; we may argue in terms of all the philosophies on earth; but one fact remains true throughout—that we do not love life, in the sense that we are greatly preoccupied about its conservation; that we do not, properly speaking, love life at all, but living."

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If this view of life inveighs against the abysmal interpretations propounded by uninspired intellect, none the less also it is beyond the maladies of intellect; and herein largely consists its tonic bracing quality for its age. For it life is a good in itself, centred in its own joys, its own sufficient resources; we need not always be looking round the corner for a hidden pitfall, or asking whether life is worth living, or quarrelling with the untoward circumstances which are so slow to bring its felicities from outside. It is the spirit that quickeneth; let the spirit be sound, and there is no occasion for depression or fatigue over its problems. In the same essay last quoted from, Stevenson thus laughs down the shallowness that sees only

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gloom ahead: "There is a great deal of very vile nonsense talked upon both sides of the matter: tearing divines reducing life to the dimensions of a mere funeral procession, so short as to be hardly decent; and melancholy unbelievers yearning for the tomb as if it were a world too far away. Both sides must feel a little ashamed of their performances now and again when they draw in their chairs to dinner. Indeed, a good meal and a bottle of wine is an answer to most standard works upon the question. When a man's heart warms to his viands, he forgets a great deal of sophistry, and soars into a rosy zone of contemplation." In the same vein, in his essay on Walt Whitman, he portrays the torpor of the age, and in such terms that we can see he felt upon himself the burden of a mission against it. "We are accustomed nowadays," he says, "to a great deal of puling over the circumstances in which we are placed. The great refinement of many poetical gentlemen has rendered them practically unfit for the jostling and ugliness of life, and they record their unfitness at considerable length. The bold and awful poetry of Job's complaint produces too many flimsy imitators; for there is always something consolatory in grandeur, but the symphony transposed for the piano becomes hysterically sad. This literature of woe, as Whitman calls it, . . . is in many ways a most humiliating and sickly phenomenon. Young gentlemen with three or four hundred a year of private means look down from a pinnacle of doleful experience on all the grown and hearty

men who have dared to say a good word for life since the beginning of the world. There is no prophet but the melancholy Jacques, and the blue devils dance on all our literary wires." In the words that follow these we get a glimpse of the impulse that has set him into this somewhat unusual vein of invective; it is his impulse, as one who sees and can guide, to meet the responsibilities of his endowments and make a better spirit of things prevail. "It would be a poor service to spread culture," he goes on to say, "if this be its result, among the comparatively innocent and cheerful ranks of men. When our little poets have to be sent to look at the ploughman and learn wisdom, we must be careful how we tamper with our ploughmen. Where a man in not the best of circumstances preserves composure of mind, and relishes ale and tobacco, and his wife and children, in the intervals of dull and unremunerative labour; where a man in this predicament can afford a lesson by the way to what are called his intellectual superiors, there is plainly something to be lost, as well as something to be gained, by teaching him to think differently. It is better to leave him as he is than to teach him whining. It is better that he should go without the cheerful lights of culture, if cheerless doubt and paralyzing sentimentalism are to be the consequence. Let us, by all means, fight against that hide-bound stolidity of sensation and sluggishness of mind which blurs and decolourizes for poor natures the wonderful pageant of consciousness; let us teach people, as much as we can, to enjoy, and

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they will learn for themselves to sympathize; but let us see to it, above all, that we give these lessons in a brave, vivacious note, and build the man up in courage while we demolish its substitute, indifference."

Here then we may sum up the influence of that wholesome reaction which Stevenson had a pioneer's part in bringing to his troubled age. Addressing itself to the same spiritual malaise that Teufelsdröckh felt so many years ago, and that has so lingered in the heart of the age since, it asks, not now in truculence but in courage and tender sympathy, the same question that brought Carlyle to his senses: "What art thou afraid of?" and then, going on to the answer, instead of reducing life to a grim defiance of Tophet and snarling at the devil, sets man with hope and joy and the morning purity of youth before "the wonderful pageant of consciousness," to use and assimilate the glories of an intensely interesting world. Get the energetic spirit of man in that attitude, and what is there to fear or distrust, what is there to induce this torpor and fatigue, after all?

I need not remind you again how seasonable this is, and what a tonic it has been to these later days. We have only to think how the emphasis of things has shifted: how Mrs. Humphry Ward and her imitators, with their uneasy exploitation of religious enigmas, have all the irksomeness of a "back number"; how Hall Caine's Christian, when we compare him with the unspoken ideal of a sturdy sense, is contemned as a Christian freak and fool; how Kip-

ling and Hope and Weyman, with their frank return to healthy animalism and the scarce restrained impulses of the natural man, are calling forth such an answering chord of sentiment; how old Omar Khayyam is living anew, not so much from his agnosticism and his disposition to say audacious things to God, as from his truce to theological subtilties and his hearty acceptance of this present life and its good cheer. From these random instances we can judge what is coming to be the prevailing mood and sentiment of the time. It is to the spirit what our vogue of athletics is to the body: it starts a genial warmth and suggests a rub-down and a hearty meal; and from it we turn to our work with a sense of buoyancy and lightness, and with a readiness to meet all the uncertainties of the future, and have no fear.

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Now of course I am not disposed to ascribe all this to Stevenson. But he was, as I have repeatedly said, a pioneer spirit in it, with the advantage that his utterance came just at the crest of the time, when a great wearied heart was ready for it. Another thing too cannot be spared from the account. His wonderful gift of expression made the definition of the new movement vital and operative in those minds which respond to the thrill of language, that finest vehicle of spiritual communion. On the author-class especially, whose activities are concerned with moving the mass of men by language, he wrought as acknowledged master and model. "While he lived," said Quiller-Couch at the time of his death, "he moved men to put their

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utmost even into writings that quite certainly would never meet his eye. Surely another age will wonder over this curiosity of letters — that for five years the needle of literary endeavour in Great Britain has quivered towards a little island in the South Pacific, as to its magnetic pole." A man who possesses such an influence is not the arbiter of style alone. If, as Edmund Gosse called him, he is "the most inspiriting, the most fascinating human being that I have known," and if that fascination glamours not only his personality but the whole of life as he interprets and lives it, this also will have its power, this glow of health and insight also, through those whose utterance in turn is thrilled by it, will work its work in the age. By its intrinsic charm it has placed itself so as to control the channels of uplift and power.

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URNING now to the salient elements in Stevenson's attitude to life, with their points of outset in his personality, we note as the most outstanding element the view, or tacit tenet, which in Stevenson's disciples and successors has assumed most the character of a reaction, and which accordingly has wrought to traverse a venerable religious presupposition. Stevenson freely assumes, though still as a balanced sanity and temperance, what in some of the less-grounded spirits has become more brutal and glaring, —that the natural man, the man who has a

complete outfit of instincts and appetites implanted at birth, has rights which we are bound to respect and maintain, apart from the discount that we must reckon for depravity and the duty of spiritualizing him by regeneration. He builds, in other words, on the basal assumption that man is in very fair working-order before the clergy have got hold of him. This assumption was just the thing that a conscience-morbid age would most naturally grasp at, and perhaps, by reason of the reactive element in it, coarsen into a sort of antinomianism. Not so, however, Stevenson. In him the spirit of the natural man is still a beauty and a grace, like the grace of youth and innocence; healthy too, and racy of the soil. In his relation to that idea of the natural man which was rooted in his native tradition, he has an analogue in our American literature. As our own Hawthorne gave forth his heritage of Puritanism not as an austerity but as a kind of fragrance, so, we may say, Stevenson distils into a fragrance the inherited breath and influence of Scotch Presbyterianism. He neither denies nor accepts original sin and depravity; he simply ignores them, as if the man for whom he lives and writes were to reckon himself dead to them. It is not so much that he has broken with the austere tenets of Calvinism, as that, like the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, he is resolved to leave the rudiments of the theory of life, such as dealings with sin and conversion, and considering these disposed of once for all, go on unto perfection. His natural unforced man, then, is not a mere

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creature of instincts and appetites, like a finer brute, but a being in whom the goodly heritage of Christian centuries is so ingrained that he may trust himself to follow his impulses without thought, while he lives his nobler life as to the manner born. Surely there is nothing revolutionary in this. It merely assumes that manhood has resources of its own to utilize, beyond settling the preliminary question how to get manhood. Instead of taking up his station, as Evangelism so long has done, before the threshold of the renewed life, he occupies a place so far beyond the entrance that the man may enjoy the freedom and the scenery of that region, and explore its wealth of beauty, as a matter of course.

All this is consistent and continuous with that higher trend of life commonly called the spiritual; it has all the organs and proclivities for living the life of the spirit. But its power in literature to-day is mainly on the elemental side, the side which hitherto has had its rights for the most part under ecclesiastical protest. There is something free and bracing in the discovery that Calvin, in his theory of total depravity, overlooked some things in the penumbra of totality which may be so enjoyed as to leave the soul intact; and we must give the new feeling time to adjust itself to its wider range. We may be sure that when the various excesses of coltishness are corrected much good will accrue to the body cogitative from it.

In the whole spiritual movement of which this is a part Mr. James Lane Allen discerns a vi-

rility, a largeness, a deepening, which he names the Masculine Principle coming to expression in our literature. "It is striking out boldly," he says, "for larger things,—larger areas of adventure, larger spaces of history, with freer movements through both: it would have the wings of a bird in the air, and not the wings of a bird on a woman's hat. . . . And if, finally, it has any one characteristic more discernible than another, it is the movement away from the summits of life downward toward the bases of life; from the heights of civilization to the primitive springs of action; from the thin-aired regions of consciousness which are ruled over by Tact to the underworld of unconsciousness where are situated the mighty workshops, and where toils on forever the cyclopean youth, Instinct."

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All this we may regard as in a sense the present-day phase of the answer to Teufelsdröckh's question, "What art thou afraid of?" And perhaps the age will bear it if for once we do leave our inveterate presupposition of man's innate corruption unregarded, and dare to let self-expression, trained as it is through a long growth of ennobling and Christianizing ideas, be large and untrammelled. It is well at least to know, if we may, that when left to his natural self man may signify something more than tobacco and gin and lust,—that there are, at the bases of his nature, thoroughly sound and respectable traits, after all.

Of this natural manhood the note which Stevenson has most at heart and strikes most

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constantly is its wholeness and wholesomeness, that character which, being its own great sufficiency and reward, can trust itself soul-forward and without apology to its own self-expression. Life is not a thing to buy, but to enjoy as an ultimate fact. It desires no better thing outside. A kingdom of heaven which is not a present thing, realizable in all its glory within, has no appeal to him. "The view taught at the present time," he says in his Lay Morals, "seems to me to want greatness; and the dialect in which alone it can be intelligibly uttered is not the dialect of my soul. It is a sort of postponement of life; nothing quite is, but something different is to be; we are to keep our eyes upon the indirect from the cradle to the grave. We are to regulate our conduct not by desire, but by a politic eye upon the future; and to value acts as they will bring us money or good opinion; as they will bring us, in one word, profit. . . . We are to live just now as well as we can, but scrape at last into heaven, where we shall be good. We are to worry through the week in a lay, disreputable way, but, to make matters square, live a different life on Sunday." Such a divided life as is here described, such commercial balancing of impulses and convictions, desires and conventions, incurred his heartiest antipathy. For almost anything else he could make allowance; but this invaded the very citadel of life, where a man must reckon with the unity of his own manhood. "If we were to conceive a perfect man," he says, "it should be one who was never

torn between conflicting impulses, but who, on the absolute consent of all his parts and faculties, submitted in every action of his life to a self-dictation as absolute and unreasoned as that which bids him love one woman and be true to her till death."

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In this absoluteness of surrender to the manhood current within us Stevenson has taken us far from the total-depravity school, with its nervous fear of giving human nature free play. And if he sets the nature moving according to its own free bent, and all together, then its direction must be right, for there is no part left to apply the brakes if it is headed wrong. Trained as we are in some reminiscence of the same school, we are not likely to forget this, or to let Stevenson do so. Nor does he forget it. Herein it is that he is the safest and most truly Christian of guides, that he never loses sight of the highest ends; so high that the warring region of pettiness and passion is left far below. Both whip and rein, in his programme of life, are in the hands not of the senses but of the spirit; his natural man, this latest birth of a rising and refining evolution, is as it were the Son of man. Therefore the whole normal man is sound and sacred. "All that is in the man in the larger sense," he says in this same work on Lay Morals, "what we call impression as well as what we call intuition, so far as my argument looks, we must accept. It is not wrong to desire food, or exercise, or beautiful surroundings, or the love of sex, or interest which is the food of the mind. All these are craved; all these should

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be craved; to none of these in itself does the soul demur; where there comes an undeniable want, we recognize a demand of nature. Yet we know that these natural demands may be superseded; for the demands which are common to mankind make but a shadowy consideration in comparison to the demands of the individual soul."

Superseded, then, these elemental desires may be? Yes; it is so,— superseded, not starved nor pampered; conquered neither by selfish indulgence nor selfish asceticism, but by a higher and harmonizing principle which resides in the spirit, and enables the man to live as a whole, with no schism between lower and higher. "There is another way," Stevenson goes on to say, "to supersede them by reconciliation, in which the soul and all the faculties and senses pursue a common route and share in one desire." Then after exemplifying this reconciliation from common experience, he sums up: "Now to me this seems a type of that rightness which the soul demands. It demands that we shall not live alternately with our opposing tendencies in continual seesaw of passion and disgust, but seek some path on which the tendencies shall no longer oppose, but serve each other to a common end. It demands that we shall not pursue broken ends, but great and comprehensive purposes, in which soul and body may unite like notes in a harmonious chord. . . . The soul demands unity of purpose, not the dismemberment of man; it seeks to roll up all his strength and sweetness, all his pas-

sion and wisdom, into one, and make of him a perfect man exulting in perfection."

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A man of Stevenson's spiritual antecedents could not hold such a conclusion as this idly, or ignore the elements that make against it. With a great sum must he purchase his freedom. There is the fact of sin to be reckoned with. There are the pains of accusing conscience and unrealized ideals. These are the discount side of the book, the prose reality to set over against our dreams. And Stevenson has reckoned with them. It is, in fact, when he is dealing with these stern facts of life that he strikes at once his most exalted and most practical note. That free manhood which he has so much at heart is to move in a region to which the evil we would shun is absolutely alien; no more entering our thought, as a necessary ingredient of life, than would arson or highway robbery. I have spoken of this already; it is the Apostle Paul's idea of reckoning ourselves dead to sin, translated into modern idiom. "It is probable," Stevenson says in his Christmas Sermon, "that nearly all who think of conduct at all, think of it too much; it is certain we all think too much of sin. We are not damned for doing wrong, but for not doing right; Christ would never hear of negative morality; thou shalt was ever his word, with which he superseded thou shalt not. To make our idea of morality centre on forbidden acts is to defile the imagination and to introduce into our judgments of our fellow-men a secret element of gusto. If a thing is wrong for us, we should not dwell upon the thought of it; or

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we shall soon dwell upon it with inverted pleasure. . . . A man may have a flaw, a weakness, that unfits him for the duties of life, that spoils his temper, that threatens his integrity, or that betrays him into cruelty. It has to be conquered; but it must never be suffered to engross his thoughts. The true duties lie all upon the farther side, and must be attended to with a whole mind so soon as this preliminary clearing of the decks has been effected. In order that he may be kind and honest, it may be needful he should become a total abstainer; let him become so then, and the next day let him forget the circumstance. Trying to be kind and honest will require all his thoughts; a mortified appetite is never a wise companion; in so far as he has had to mortify an appetite, he will still be the worse man; and of such an one a great deal of cheerfulness will be required in judging life, and a great deal of humility in judging others." Just such sane and sensible treatment he applies also to conscience, in his Reflection and Remarks on Human Life. "Never allow your mind," he says, "to dwell on your own misconduct; that is ruin. The conscience has morbid sensibilities; it must be employed but not indulged, like the imagination or the stomach. Let each stab suffice for the occasion; to play with this spiritual pain turns to penance; and a person easily learns to feel good by dallying with the consciousness of having done wrong. Shut your eyes hard against the recollection of your sins. Do not be afraid, you will not be able to forget them. . . . The study

of conduct has to do with grave problems; not every action should be higgled over; one of the leading virtues therein is to let oneself alone. But if you make it your chief employment, you are sure to meddle too much. This is the great error of those who are called pious. Although the war of virtue be unending except with life, hostilities are frequently suspended, and the troops go into winter quarters; but the pious will not profit by these times of truce; where their conscience can perceive no sin, they will find a sin in that very innocency; and so they pervert, to their annoyance, those seasons which God gives to us for repose and a reward."

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N this free-moving life, so spontaneous and unforced as to suggest the unrestrained natural man, so true to high possibilities and dead to baseness as to suggest the pure freedom of the spirit, there is one comprehensive mark of health and perfect function. It is happy; it moves in joy. This is its side as turned to its own fulfilment and destiny, the music it makes with all its strings in perfect tune and harmony. And because it is happy, it is a source and radiator of happiness; not laying austere exactions on men but smoothing their way to manhood. This is its side as turned to the world. The two sides are natural complements of each other. By so much as life fails of happiness, by so much an alien element is there, a limitation, a power-

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consuming friction, which ought not and was never meant to be. By so much as it fails to radiate and promote happiness, by so much it has missed or perverted its true design in the sum of things. The sign of its wholeness is a free play of good cheer. Carlyle's discovery that the lack of happiness might be countervailed by blessedness, as if a man could at once be profoundly miserable on some accounts and on others be profoundly blissful, — his sum-total of life being thus a greater or less balance between contradictory currents, — was entirely foreign to Stevenson's ideal; it belonged, in fact, to a disturbed and divided nature, and to a man who was eternally thinking of himself. Such a man Stevenson most emphatically was not. His was the royal wholeness of a nature moving all together, without apology or evil discount. He had not to think of self but to be; not to cipher out an attitude to life but to live; not even to appoint himself a missionary of the doctrine of happiness to other men, like those actors who posture and snigger in order to raise a laugh, but simply to be happy and make that happiness, with its solid glow of heat, its own excuse for being. Such happiness is contagious; it needs no bolstering of propaganda; it awakens echoes, it calls out responsive cheer by its mere self-evidencing wholesomeness.

This happiness in Stevenson was more than temperamental; it had based itself in the wise and penetrative spirit. Nor was it any shallow evasion of the deeps of life; it was at polar remove from the mere physical well-being of

a gourmand, or the glee of an empty-headed dancer. It had made itself good against too much ill health for that; and underlying it were centuries of digested thought and doctrine. An efflorescence, a fruitage, it truly was, culminating from profound strains of vital meditation; it was, in a word, Stevenson's religion, and when we consider all that went to the shaping of it, a religion fair and sufficient.

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As to its point of outset in his personality, there is not wanting to it a certain note of self-monition, almost of belligerency, as if he felt it laid upon him to work out what he calls his "great task of happiness" from a stubborn experience; the spirit of him rejoicing to overcome, rejoicing the more as the foe is fiercer and stronger, yet resolved to keep the pain of his struggle from others, while he makes himself, and himself alone, the arena. He certainly had stern enough reason for such self-incitement; and that he has on the whole so successfully transmuted it into the pure outcome of rational happiness is what coming ages will honour as his lifelong heroism.

To quote passages that give inculcation and definition to this would be little representative, either as to bulk or as to wording, of its vital importance in Stevenson's body of thought; to quote passages wherein this is the atmosphere and presupposition, making itself felt as a pulsation, a flavour, a tonic, beyond the crudeness of words, would be to quote well-nigh all that he ever wrote. There is a sacredness about it, a holiness as cherished ideal and due, which makes

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it more fitly a subject of prayer than of dissertation. You remember that striking prayer of his in verse, entitled The Celestial Surgeon; one cannot help thinking the whole current of Stevenson's aspiration flowed through that:

"If I have faltered more or less
In my great task of happiness;
If I have moved among my race
And shown no glorious morning face;
If beams from happy human eyes
Have moved me not; if morning skies,
Books, and my food, and summer rain
Knocked on my sullen heart in vain:—
Lord, thy most pointed pleasure take
And stab my spirit broad awake;
Or, Lord, if too obdurate I,
Choose thou, before that spirit die,
A piercing pain, a killing sin,
And to my dead heart run them in!"

In his Prayers written for Family Use in Vailima, also, the petition for courage and happiness, and especially for grace to fulfil all the spontaneous expressions of happiness—mirth, laughter, gaiety—is the dominant note; it sounds in some way in every one of them. Here are some of the petitions, taken as one runs the collection through: "Give us courage and gaiety and the quiet mind. . . . The day returns and brings us the petty round of irritating concerns and duties. Help us to play the man, help us to perform them with laughter and kind faces, let cheerfulness abound with industry. . . . Give us to awake with smiles, give us to

labour smiling. . . . Give us health, food, bright weather, and light hearts. . . . Let us lie down without fear and awake and arise with exultation. . . . Grant us courage to endure lesser ills unshaken, and to accept death, loss, and disappointment as it were straws upon the tide of life. . . . When the day returns, return to us, our sun and comforter, and call us up with morning faces and with morning hearts — eager to labour — eager to be happy, if happiness shall be our portion — and if the day be marked for sorrow, strong to endure it." The day after this last petition was written was marked, for his family, by the great sorrow of his sudden death.

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But never was this happiness sought as a mere gratification or self-appeasement. In the large sympathy of Stevenson, so little aware of self, it was always valued as if it were a light or warmth or bracing atmosphere in whose blessing all could share. He sought in order that he might impart; the two could not be dissociated. In all his literary calling, as well as in his personal relations, this was so. To make his neighbour happy was the surest way to do his neighbour good. Even if the neighbour was in sin or error, needing to be taught or reformed, he were best approached by the way of genial comradery and entertainment, and taught as though one taught him not. So, though a potent source of cheer and sweeter living, nay, of monition, Stevenson never sets up as a corrector and reformer, never assumes to force his goodness or wisdom on his less-favoured neighbour. "There is an idea abroad among moral peo-

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ple," he says in his Christmas Sermon, "that they should make their neighbours good. One person I have to make good: myself. But my duty to my neighbour is much more nearly expressed by saying that I have to make him happy—if I may."

Therefore if a person's life, however conventionally upright, is morose or austere, if his morality is not of that fibre which engenders joy, it is wrong, it is missing its true power and function, there is something false in its foundation. "The kingdom of heaven," he says in this same Christmas Sermon, "is of the child-like, of those who are easy to please, who love and who give pleasure. Mighty men of their hands, the smiters and the builders and the judges, have lived long and done sternly and yet preserved this lovely character; and among our carpet interests and twopenny concerns, the shame were indelible if we should lose it. Gentleness and cheerfulness, these come before all morality; they are the perfect duties. And it is the trouble with moral men that they have neither one nor other. It was the moral man, the Pharisee, whom Christ could not away with. If your morals make you dreary, depend upon it they are wrong. I do not say 'give them up,' for they may be all you have; but conceal them like a vice, lest they should spoil the lives of better and simpler people."

If to some solemn-visaged person the gentleness and cheerfulness here praised seems in Stevenson, as it often must, to have effervesced in bubbling rollicking fun, let him not be de-

ceived. It is not froth nor shallowness; it is an integral element of that principle on which he based his comradeship with men. It is in fact no necessary sign of superior greatness or goodness when we take ourselves with such abysmal seriousness. It may rather be a sign of limitation. Just as — to quote from the delightful Apology for Idlers — "extreme busyness, whether at school or college, kirk or market, is a symptom of deficient vitality; and a faculty for idleness implies a catholic appetite and a strong sense of personal identity"; — so, changing the application but not the principle, we may say, extreme seriousness and strenuousness, with the thought always troubled for the propriety and morality of things, is a symptom that the morality is not quite ingrained; it is too unsure of its own integrity to let go and take itself for granted. If character is the breath of our manhood, — why, we are not always taking thought how to breathe. There is something in Stevenson's abandon, his freedom from the "prunes and prisms" of conventional conduct, his large tolerance for men and creeds, the lightness with which he moves in the presence alike of the grim and the gay, which is to life what play is to work, or the easy grace of an artist hand in the moulding of a masterpiece. It is in fact the free play of the spirit which takes duty and experience without effort, and as it were in a kind of leisure and nonchalance, because it is so easily master of itself. This was Stevenson's working-ideal; and if he reduced the expression of it to the one element

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of happiness, it was because that was its most palpable hold and handle. That was a thing that recommended the life behind it. "There is no duty we so much underrate," he says further in the Apology for Idlers, "as the duty of being happy. By being happy, we sow anonymous benefits upon the world, which remain unknown even to ourselves, or when they are disclosed, surprise nobody so much as the benefactor. . . . A happy man or woman is a better thing to find than a five-pound note. He or she is a radiating focus of good will; and their entrance into a room is as though another candle had been lighted. We need not care whether they could prove the forty-seventh proposition; they do a better thing than that, they practically demonstrate the great Theorem of the Liveableness of Life."

V

HE great Theorem of the Liveableness of Life"—this sums it up very well; this it was that Stevenson, in all his wanderings and enforced exile, in all his gallant fight with disease, set himself with the fervour of an apostle to demonstrate; and the progressive solution of it, sealed only when his "happy-starred, full-blooded spirit" vanished from earth, has sent a thrill of vigour and good cheer through the world. My talk about this, with the citations, has already gone on, I fear, past excusable length; and yet the subject refuses to be put

off without a few words concerning how all this came to utterance.

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Stevenson was a dedicated spirit—dedicated and predestined to the great art of expression. It was his joy, it was the breath of his being, to coin that buoyant clear-seeing life of his into creative forms of word and figure. Not life itself was closer to his heart than this. You recall that O altitudo which breaks out in one of his letters to Henley during his happy hard-working season at Hyères: "O the height and depth of novelty and worth in any art! and O that I am privileged to swim and shoulder through such oceans! Could one get out of sight of land—all in the blue? Alas not, being anchored here in flesh, and the bonds of logic being still about us. But what a great space and a great air there is in these small shallows where alone we venture! And how new each sight, squall, calm, or sunrise! . . . I sleep upon my art for a pillow; I waken in my art; I am unready for death, because I hate to leave it. I love my wife, I do not know how much, nor can, nor shall, unless I lost her; but while I can conceive my being widowed, I refuse the offering of life without my art. I am not but in my art; it is me; I am the body of it merely."

How he was drawn into his literary art, as it were into a fate, is a familiar tale. It came by the natural practical way—the way of apprenticeship. He made indeed starts on other roads: on his father's calling of lighthouse engineering, for which however his health proved too precarious; and, to please his father, on the law,

which he pursued just far enough to pass as advocate, and then left forever. Meanwhile his congenial apprenticeship, self-appointed, was going on steadily; it was not in him to repress it, although to begin with he had little forecast of what it would amount to. All the while he was studying how to express things in language; working with the possibilities of words, fitting words to sights and sounds and thoughts, searching for the essential note and key in which an idea should be written, imitating the effects which in his favourite authors he discovered and enjoyed. It was the artist drawing from models; the composer aping Mozart or Haydn; the workman reproducing according to the patterns of his master. Never mind the future use to be made of it; the work itself for the time being was its own interest and reward. "It was not so much," he says, "that I wished to be an author (though I wished that too) as that I had vowed that I would learn to write. That was a proficiency that tempted me; and I practised to acquire it, as men learn to whittle, in a wager with myself. . . . That," he says a little farther on (it is in his essay on A College Magazine), "that, like it or not, is the way to learn to write; whether I have profited or not, that is the way."

I must not let this account of his literary apprenticeship draw me away from my subject; I have in fact introduced it not for its own sake but on account of the reflex influence thereby revealed, of his art on his attitude to life. His life coloured and vitalized his art, that is true;

it was art of a certain trend and significance because of the life he lived and interpreted. But also the converse is true: the pursuit of his art, from words onward and inward to things, truths, relations, led him ever to a closer and clearer vision of life, and a juster proportioning of its elements. His very achievements in interpretation brought with them greater range and depth of insight; and where insight went, there his allegiance went also. Starting, as he says, with simple description, fitting what he saw with appropriate words (a kind of primary exercise in which he had been paralleled by Tennyson) he soon came to have an exquisite sense not only of accurate meanings but of what he calls the "key of words," that delicate rapport in the words and rhythms of a passage which corresponds to what artists call their colour-scheme. He chose words not for themselves alone, but for the help they would give other words; and so the finished work was set in one key, with word and word, image and thing imaged homogeneous. So far forth this looks like mere craftsmanship, or if you will grant it, artistry. It may easily be despised by Philistines who know not how much travail of spirit has gone to their ease of reading. But while mere word-mongery is a possibility to be shunned, on the other hand it is easy to underrate words too much. After all, words are almost the only means of laying soul upon soul, of effecting that communion whereby the highest values of life are transmitted. And with Stevenson they never stopped with sound and manipulation; they

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stood for something; they were elements in a world; their very atmosphere and key belonged to the artistry not of sounds alone but of life. The very magic which they wrought became vital in character and conduct. "One thing," he says in his essay on Truth of Intercourse, "you can never make Philistine natures understand; one thing, which yet lies on the surface, remains as unseizable to their wits as a high flight of metaphysics — namely, that the business of life is mainly carried on by means of this difficult art of literature, and according to a man's proficiency in that art shall be the freedom and the fulness of his intercourse with other men." Viewed in this light, the art of words is simply the art of telling the truth, with all the colourings, the shadings, the proportions, the implications, the saving-clauses, essential to making it rounded truth and not a caricature or distortion.

We hear much nowadays about shifting or newly determining the emphasis of a creed or a system. It is mainly a matter of the proportions and perspectives of language, of getting our dogma into such literary shape and colour that the sum-total, as laid alike on the discerning mind and the tenderly apprehensive heart, shall correspond to our deep sense of truth. There is a kind of crystallization in ideas as in style, a settling and adjustment of elements until each part has found its place, its relation, its fellowship. We come in sight of this as soon as we get beyond the sound of words to their inner meaning, as soon as we look beyond the

symbol to the thing. Then we become aware that the thing, whose beginning is the word, may be the most energetic of acts, the most inspiring of faiths, the most sacred of ideals, all implicated in a large homogeneous art of expression.

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Now with this controlling conception of the subtle congruities and harmonies of his cherished art, there were certain deep elements of life ready to meet Stevenson, just as soon as his working-tools were sharpened and subdued to mastery. It was not all to be Treasure Islands and Prince Ottos. His sense of the fated marriage of words to ideas, and of the proportioning which should make the whole tissue homogeneous, led him duly toward the deep bases of things; and especially, as he was a Scotchman, it had a work cut out for it in the complexities and perplexities of accepted systems. He was not of the kind, in spite of his genial temperament, to dance by and ignore these. "With high social spirits," says his biographer Colvin, "and a brilliant somewhat fantastic gaiety of bearing, Stevenson was no stranger to the storms and perplexities of youth. A restless and inquiring conscience, perhaps inherited from covenanting ancestors, kept him inwardly calling in question the grounds of conduct and the accepted codes of society. At the same time his reading had shaken his belief in Christian dogma; the harsher forms of Scottish Calvinistic Christianity being at all times repugnant to his nature." It is out of such a nature as this, so exercised, that Stevenson's gospel of cour-

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age and happiness comes; out of a nature, too, to whom an unsure word, an untempered colouring of idea, is a pain like the pain of dishonesty and falsehood. There are not wanting evidences of his sense of the crookedness and perversity of things; there is an Omar Khayyam vein in his nature; you see it, for example, in his writings of the Pulvis et Umbra period. Yet how little of this there is in his finished works, and more especially in the gist and outcome of the whole; how little even his trenchant disavowal of religious conventionalisms leaves of what people call skeptical tendency. He is no scoffer, no satirist; nor can you saddle him with any of the destructive -isms with which the world reproaches men in order to set them up as a warning.

That this was no accident but the result of balanced wisdom and sanity, we have indications in his letters and unfinished sketches. Not only the artistic finish but the tone, the influence, the guiding trend of his work was a matter of solicitude to him, a matter to be accurately adjusted. To his father he writes from Hyères about a projected work, probably Virginibus Puerisque: "It is a most difficult work; a touch of the parson will drive off those I hope to influence; a touch of overstrained laxity, besides disgusting, like a grimace, may do harm." This casual remark lets us well into the spirit that governed Stevenson's art, and the sense of a mission that was upon him. The sturdy principle was there; the insight also, with the desire to emancipate men from the hoary errors

that so depressed the tone of life. But in his spirit of comradeship and letting-live he shrank from setting up as a teacher, with the superiority implied in that assumption; he preferred rather to put his thoughts in story, and in the non-didactic form of conversational playful essay; and with this he called his masterful art of word and literary atmosphere to his aid, so that the reader, responding to the magic thrill, should find his thoughts and ideals moving in the congenial region, gathering the spiritual current and standard from the key of word and sentiment, thinking himself from the concrete case into the harmonizing attitude to life, as Owen thought the organism from the single bone. So art did his teaching, as though he taught not, and this by transporting men into the sunlit and bracing region where, simply by looking round and learning to be at home, they could orient themselves.

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In the exultant practice of this self-rewarding art Stevenson's life was a perpetual voyage of discovery. Whether it was in travel, in coming upon new cities and mountain-chains and stretches of sea-coast; or in exploring new tracts of character, motive, psychology; or, underlying all this, in seeing the true relations of life fall into place and assume the attire of reasonable and seemly interpretation, hoary and outworn systems thus giving way not to dust and despite but to reconcilement and vital solution,—all was to him virtually the creation of a new and happy world, from which nothing human was alien, in which the regions from

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the clear heaven of spiritual beauty down to the grim and troublous elements of being were open to a singularly penetrative and catholic sympathy. Upborne by this spirit of discovery, and by the sense of its limitless field and reward, he could bear patiently and with cheerfulness to snatch brief reprisals from long periods of illness, nay, could treat even failure as a mere incident and stimulus to more. As Gosse says of him: "He never conceived that he had achieved a great success, but he never lost hope that by taking pains he might yet do so." Or as he himself says, in words that seem coined out of this conscious trait (I quote from his Reflection and Remarks on Human Life): "I meant when I was a young man to write a great poem; and now I am cobbling little prose articles and in excellent good spirits, I thank you. So, too, I meant to lead a life that should keep mounting from the first; and though I have been repeatedly down again below sea-level, and am scarce higher than when I started, I am as keen as ever for that enterprise. Our business in this world is not to succeed, but to continue to fail, in good spirits."

The whimsical epitaph that he proposed for himself in his Inland Voyage has a good deal the flavour of a summary of his character. His canoe, you remember, had capsized in the Oise, and he after much exertion had managed to crawl, more dead than alive, upon an overhanging tree trunk, his paddle still tightly clutched in his hand. A mishap of no great significance it was, one such as we daily laugh away. It

does not take a great occasion to give the last nudge of suggestion to a happy saying, nor need the saying be magniloquent to reverberate from a depth of inner nature. If we may give weight to Carlyle's adage, "Burn your own smoke"—a thing which he conspicuously failed to do—and to George Eliot's sombre advice to "do without opium," surely in this sunnier spiritual era with which Stevenson is identified we may listen to what in his characteristic way he proposed so lightly. "On my tomb," he says, "if ever I have one, I mean to get these words inscribed: 'He clung to his paddle.'"

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Yes; that is what he did, through a life that strove not for success but for a happy, hopeful, helpful self-expression. He clung to his paddle; he never gave up. What was there to exchange that buoyant energy for, if he had relinquished it? The work, the art, the life, was its own heaven, its own exceeding reward. Nothing that was to be thereafter could take the place of that, until its time came. Let us take leave of him in these closing words of his essay on El Dorado:

"A strange picture we make on our way to our chimæras, ceaselessly marching, grudging ourselves the time for rest; indefatigable, adventurous pioneers. It is true that we shall never reach the goal; it is even more than probable that there is no such place; and if we lived for centuries and were endowed with the powers of a god, we should find ourselves not much nearer what we wanted at the end. O toiling hands of mortals! O unwearied feet, travelling

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ye know not whither! Soon, soon, it seems to you, you must come forth on some conspicuous hilltop, and but a little way further, against the setting sun, descry the spires of El Dorado. Little do ye know your own blessedness; for to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labour."

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